

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This paper is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed on May 10, 2006. At that time, claims 1-3, 13-17, 22-24, and 28-31 were pending in the application. Claims 4-12, 18-21, 25-27 and 32 have been withdrawn in response to a prior a restriction requirement. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected the pending claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,899,490 (hereinafter the “‘490 patent”).

As a result of this paper, claims 2 and 23 have been cancelled. Likewise, claims 1, 22, and 31 have been amended. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

I. Rejection of Claims 1-3, 13-17, 22-24, and 28-31 Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 13-17, 22-24, and 28-31 under § 102(b) as being anticipated by the ‘490 patent. As a result of this paper, claims 2 and 23 have been canceled. With respect to the remaining claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

“A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.” MPEP § 2131 (*citing Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987)). “The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim.” *Id.* (*citing Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989)). In addition, “the reference must be enabling and describe the applicant’s claimed invention sufficiently to have placed it in possession of a person of ordinary skill in the field of the invention.” *In re Paulsen*, 31 USPQ2d 1671, 1673 (Fed. Cir. 1994).

With respect to independent claims 1, 22, and 31, these claims have been amended to recite the step of “*individually* pleat-folding the inboard face and the outboard face of the longitudinal fill chamber portion of the airbag cushion.” Support for this amendment is found in the specification at, for example, page 17, line 4. As taught by the specification, this “individual” folding of the inboard face and the outboard face of the airbag means that each of these layers is folded separately to form two distinct pleats. In fact, claims 1 and 22 have been further amended to clarify that there is a “single pleat in the inboard face of the airbag cushion and a single pleat in the outboard face of the longitudinal fill chamber portion of the airbag cushion.”

This claim element regarding “individual,” separate folding of the inboard and outboard face is not taught by the ‘490 patent. On the contrary, the ‘490 patent discloses pleat folding the “inboard” and “outboard” layer together to form a single pleat. *See e.g.*, 490 patent, Figure 12. Accordingly, as the ‘490 patent does not disclose the step of individually folding the inboard and outboard layers, this reference cannot anticipate independent claims 1, 22, and 31. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

With respect to dependent claims 3, 13-17, 24, and 28-30, these claims depend from either claim 1 or claim 22. Accordingly, these dependent claims are similarly allowable for the same reasons outlined above in conjunction with claims 1 and 22. Withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

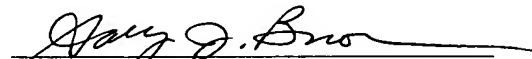
II. Withdrawn Claims

In the prior restriction requirement, the Examiner stated that claims 1 and 22 were “generic” claims pertaining to all of the species. As noted above, these generic claims are allowable. Accordingly, under the standards set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.141, the withdrawn claims, namely claims 4-12, 18-21, 25-27 and 32, should be added back into the present application. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If there are any remaining issues preventing allowance of the pending claims that may be clarified by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: 8/10/06

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